THE PARISH MESSENGER

News of the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod of America

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Emmaus

By REV. G. GUTTORMSSON

The two went out the city gate;
They walked with slow and heavy tread,
And heeded not the songs of spring;
They had no hope, their Lord was dead.

And back there yonder stood the Cross,
Still with those cursed arms outspread,
A naked, ghoulish, hateful thing,
That gloated when their Lord was dead.

A stranger joined them on the road;
He showed them what the scriptures said.
Their hearts were warmed, but still they grieved,
For in their souls the Lord lay dead.

For there is neither peace nor joy,
But all is gloom and chill and dread,
And life is like a dreary waste;
In winter, if your Lord is dead.

They offered him their humble home,
To have Him rested, cheered and fed;
For they were kind, and kindness lives,
When even faith and hope are dead.

Now swift as lightning flashed the truth:
They knew Him when He blessed the bread—
"The Christ is here! He lives! He lives!"
And nevermore the Lord was dead.

And now they heard the songs of spring,
The Cross had lost its curse and dread;
And life became a blessed thing,
The moment when He blessed the bread.

The gracious Word, that Bread of Life
Was offered, but my soul was dead,
Until I saw the Living Lord:
I knew Him when He blessed the Bread.

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News Journal of the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod of America.

Printed Quarterly in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

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Marching . . .

We're beginning to march like Christian soldiers in our Church's call to us to become better Christian stewards in the matter of giving more generously to the causes of our Church's work! Yes, our synod is now on the march, and we thank God for the growing vision of our people who are more and more understanding and responding to the "wide work" of our Church. Our Church does not end with our own local congregation. Our Church's mission is country-wide, and international. To bring the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to all the world is our mission, our challenge — our privilege. Here is a news item that was printed in a recent issue of our U.L.C.A.'s "Stewardship Bulletin":

"The Icelandic synods in the U.S. and Canada evidently mean business (in regard to stewardship) because their synod's 5,043 confirmed members increased their giving for missions by 66% during 1951. The Lutheran Laymen's Movement produces and distributes stewardship material for the 33 synods of the United Lutheran Church in the U.S. and Canada. Mr. N. O. Bardal of Winnipeg, is the Icelandic Synod's Chairman for the Lutheran Laymen's Movement for Stewardship."

Yes, 1951 showed a good step forward, but its just a start. We gave 66% more than the previous year to missions but the total amount contributed by our 5,043 confirmed members was only $2,495.71. That is only 26% of our "apportionment", (fair share per confirmed member). Or in other words it's only 49 cents per confirmed member per year for missions! If every one of our confirmed members gave only $5.00 per year for missions, or even $3.00, we'd go "way over the top" in meeting our fair share in giving to this part of God's work—and ours. Brethren, let's march onward.

Good stewardship doesn't only mean giving more money to God's work. A good steward gives **himself** to God. His love, his service, his humble behaviour. Isaac Watts expresses the true meaning of stewardship when he cries out in his Lenten hymn about the love of Christ on the Cross:

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a tribute far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

—E.H.S.

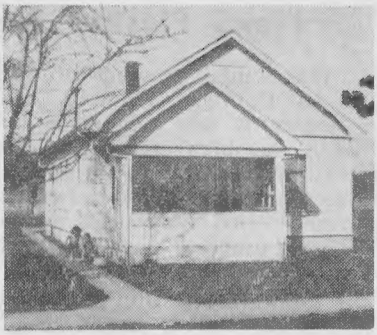
'52 Synod Convention In Minneota Parish

This year our Minneota Parish in Minnesota, plays host to the 1952 Convention of our Icelandic Synod. It will be a particularly joyous occasion for the people and pastor of the parish, as its chief feature will see the ordination of a son of the parish, Stefan Guttormsson, youngest son of Pastor and Mrs. G. Guttormsson.

The exact date of the convention has not been set as yet, but it will be held late in June. It is well that the congregations of synod begin to plan for early meetings to elect delegates to the convention. The executive committee kindly requests that names of all delegates to the convention be submitted to the synodical secretary, Pastor Harald Sigmar, Gimli, Man., a **month** before the sessions begin. Many important matters will be on the agenda of this convention, and delegates should come with the earnest desire to give their consecrated attention to the work at hand.

Parsonage of First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba:

This splendid looking parsonage of First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg, was purchased by the congregation in the winter of 1951. It was a new house, and after its purchase it was altered slightly, and a study added to it. It is a seven-room house, fully modern, with an oil furnace, and hardwood floors. Pastor and Mrs. Valdimar Eylands and family moved into their home on May 1, 1951.



Parsonage of Blaine Lutheran Church, Blaine, Wash.:

With enthusiasm and joy the people of Blaine church purchased their first parsonage in the spring of 1951. It was a relatively old house, but after extensive renovation and decoration the Blaine church now possesses a handsome little five-room cottage situated "two doors down" from their church edifice. Dr. and Mrs. Sigmar established residence in their new home on August 1, 1951.

Parsonage of Gimli Lutheran Parish, Gimli, Manitoba:

When pastor and Mrs. Harald Sigmar and family moved to Gimli in April, 1951, they moved into this lovely six-room home which had only recently been purchased by the Gimli parish. The house is relatively new, having been built in 1947. Gimli parish had owned another parsonage, a four-room cottage, and feeling the need of a larger pastor's dwelling, they sold their smaller parsonage and bought this larger and more modern house from a member of Gimli church.

News Flashes from the Parishes . . .

At the annual meeting of First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg, held this winter, it was announced that 49 adult members and 33 children jointed the congregation during 1951. Fourteen members passed away in that same period. All reports showed a year of progress and growth in the congregation.

The Stewardship film "45 Tioga Street", was shown in St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Minneota, on March 14th, to a large and appreciative audience.

The Young People's Luther League of Calvary Lutheran Church, Seattle, has been having a series of Sunday evening showings of films on the "Life of St. Paul". This series comes in 12 films each 30 minutes in length, produced by Cathedral Films, Hollywood. The films are excellent, and the people of Calvary church have turned out in goodly numbers for each of the Sunday evening showings during Lent. Recently the Calvary Luther League purchased a $400.00 16mm film-projector, and have now almost paid for it. On the evening when the new projector was dedicated, the film, "King of Kings" was shown to about 150 people.

The Blaine congregation established the regular bulletin service at the beginning of the year. Each Sunday a bulletin is issued at the services with an outline of the service for the day and announcements for the future. The first and fourth pages are different each Sunday, being prepared by our United Lutheran Publication House.

Gimli Lutheran Church will have a new Memorial Organ installed on Easter Sunday morning at an eleven o'clock service. The names of all people who have been memorialized with gifts to the organ fund will be read at that time.

The Riverton Lutheran congregation has continued to have regular services once a month conducted by Pastor H. S. Sigmar of Gimli. He has also made several trips there to conduct confirmation classes in preparation for this spring. The combined Riverton-Hnausa class has an enrollment of 34.

First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg, held their Annual Sunday School Rally on February 8th, and it was well attended by pupils and parents.

The new Board of Trustees in the Vancouver Lutheran Church are: Mr. S. J. Gillis, president; G. Henrickson, secretary; Fred Bardal, treasurer; L. H. Thorlakson, vice-president; Barney Kolbeins, Norman Ogg and B. Thorlacious. The Vancouver congregation expects their called pastor, the Rev. E. Brynjolfson, of Utskalar, Iceland, to arrive in Vancouver in July.

Blaine Church's Sunday School has an enrollment of 55, with average attendance of over 40, and a staff of seven teachers. An excellent Christmas program was presented this year under the direction of Mrs. Eleanor Stefanson. Mrs. Bob Gudmundson is the new Superintendent.

Miss Edith May Kokonson and Thorbergur Benjaminson, both of Lundar, were given in marriage by Rev. J. Fredriksson on the fourth of March. The bride is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Hokonson of Roconville, Sask. The groom is the son of the late Thomas and Soffia Benjaminson of Lundar.

The Lincoln Ladies' Aid gave a purse of one hundred dollars to Student Stefan Guttormsson this winter. Large gifts that he has received from other "aids", people and congregations in the Minneota Parish have been reported in this paper from time to time.

Pastor G. Guttormsson of Minneota, will deliver the baccalaureate sermon in commencement week at the Northwestern Lutheran Seminary next May when his son, Stefan, will be graduated from that school.

The church auditorium of First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg, has undergone a thorough renovation this winter. The entire interior of the church has been painted and decorated. Mr. K. W. Johannsson, painting contractor, was in charge of the work, and Mr. W. F. Einarson, an artist, supervised the color scheme involved.

At a congregational meeting of Calvary Church in February, the congregation raised the pastor's salary $600.00 per annum. The budget of the church for 1951 was over $5,200.00. At its annual meeting, Mr. K. F. Frederick, was elected president of the congregation. He is Consul for Iceland in Washington State.

Recently Blaine church organized a Senior Luther League. They were assisted by Pastor Eric Sigmar of Seattle.

A new heating plant was installed in the Blaine church in January.

The Rev. Dr. Sigmar of Blaine, who has been continuing to supply the Vancouver congregation in the absence of a pastor there, reports that the Christmas service there was unusually well attended with the traditional social hour following. Refreshments were served by the Women's Auxiliary.

The children of St. Paul's S.S. are enjoying the use of the S.V.E. color slide and film projector which was purchased for the school last year.

Pastor H. S. Sigmar has found transportation to Big Island to be very simple during the winter months. For his Christmas service he drove his car over the ice which was like a great smooth highway. During January and February he was given transportation by Hecla residents in the new and comfortable "Bombardiers", which can take 18 passengers.

The Gimli Lutheran Church has been supplied during the month of March by the Rev. E. Martin, Padre of the Gimli R.C.A.F. Station, in the absence of Pastor H. S. Sigmar, who has been on vacation with his family in Seattle and Blaine, Wash. While Pastor Sigmar was on his vacation in the west, he preached in our congregations at Vancouver, Blaine, Pt. Roberts, and Seattle.

Recently a Kindergarten and Junior Department was begun at First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg, to meet at 11 a.m. during the morning worship hour. This enables parents living a distance from the church to have their children in S.S. while they attend worship service. This is in addition to the 12 o'clock S.S. hour at First Lutheran. Rev. V. J. Eylands, pastor of the church, reports this new venture to be a great success.

Wednesday evening Lenten services have been held at First Lutheran Church this year with good attendances. The Men's Club of the same church had a very successful Tea recently with funds going to pay for the recent renovation of the church's kitchen.

Painting and inside decorating of the Westerheim Church was finished last fall. To what extent the church will be used in the future is still uncertain. The people attend services and S.S. in St. Paul's Minneota. The Congregation and Auxiliaries of St. Paul's reported expenditures of more than five thousand dollars for 1951. About one half of this amount was raised during the year. The remainder came from standing funds.

The community of Lundar, Clarkleigh and Oakpoint, Man., had a reception for Dr. and Mrs. N. Hjalmarson in the Lundar community hall on March 2nd, in honor of the couple's 25th wedding anniversary. Pastor J. Fredriksson led in the devotions at the beginning of the festivities. An interesting program was held, and gifts were presented to the honored couple.

The choir of Calvary Lutheran Church, Seattle, and its choirmaster, Tani Bjornson, were honored this winter when they were invited to

appear on a Sunday evening radio program called "Voices of the Northwest". It was an unusual honor since it is seldom that choirs from small churches are invited to sing on this program. The choir sang a variety of numbers on a 30-minute broadcast. Calvary Church choir is fortunate in having Mr. Bjornson as its leader; he is recognized as one of Seattle's leading baritone singers. The church is doubly fortunate in that it has also one of the leading tenor soloists in this area as a member, Dr. Edward Palmason.

Student Guttormsson delivered an address at a father and son's banquet in Hope Lutheran Church in Minneota on Monday evening, March 10. About 200 people from both the Lutheran parishes in the community attended the banquet.

First Lutheran, Winnipeg, has been having a series of Sunday evening "Fellowship Services" which have been extremely well attended. Another recent activity at First Lutheran has been an Evangelism Membership canvass. Many new members have been received into the congregation through these lay visitations.

The Annual Betel Anniversary concert held by the Ladies' Aid of First Lutheran took place in the church on March 4th, with a very interesting program. The large offering was turned over to our synodical home, Betel.

At a recent service in Calvary Lutheran, Seattle, a new and beautiful baptismal font was dedicated. It was the gift of Mr. Joe Helgason and family, members of the church. The font, made by Mr. Helgason, is done in light mahogany, and is of artistic and churchly design. On Palm Sunday a new altar gradine and throne, also made by Mr. Helgason, will be dedicated.

Pastor Eric Sigmar of Calvary, Seattle, has been asked to take part in the annual sunrise Easter service held in Washelli Park, Seattle. It is an inter-denominational service sponsored by the Seattle Council of Churches, and annually fifteen thousand people attend this special service on Easter morn.

Recent word from former synod pastor, Rev. Barney Bjarnason of Pueblo, Colorado, informs us that he has been instrumental in having the Board of American Missions purchase a large dwelling which has been converted into a chapel for worship services and rooms for Sunday School classes. He is on the road to effect the formal organization of a new congregation for our United Lutheran Church. Our best wishes and congratulations to you, Pastor Bjarnason!

Stefan Guttormsson Accepts Cavalier Call

Recently, Student Stefan Guttormsson of Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary in Minneapolis, Minn., accepted a call to become pastor of our synod's newest congregation in Cavalier, N.D. He will also serve a congregation of the ULCA's Northwest synod, in Bathgate, N. Dak. Mr. Guttormson will be graduated from the Northwestern Seminary in the month of May, this year. He will be ordained as a pastor of our synod at our annual synodical convention to be held in his father's Minneota parish, Minn., in late June.

Ronald Fafnis Recovers From Serious Operation

We all rejoice in the good news that Ronald Fafnis, eldest son of Pastor and Mrs. E. H. Fafnis of Mountain, N. Dak., has recovered from a serious brain operation. Ronald suffered a serious brain hemorrhage recently while studying at North Dakota State College, in Fargo, N. Dak. Our prayers ascend to God our Heavenly Father that Ronald will quickly be restored to good health.

OUR TREASURER TALKS

One thousand dollars has been transmitted to the ULCA apportionment and $844.73 to Lutheran World Action. CHEY received an additional $126.00. These payments have been made possible because some of our congregations are trying to meet their obligations. A recent letter from the Blaine congregation states, "We are determined to pay our apportionment this year". This expression of good will was accompanied by a cheque. I have sent no dunning letters to any congregation and I trust that I never will have to resort to such practice. The records of the congregations are reported on this page after payments have been received. When there is no payment there is no report. In the blank spaces you can write your own admonishment. The blank spaces should be noted. If a congregation finds that they are not even mentioned, that is even worse because nothing at all has been accomplished. The next "Parish Messenger" is the final one for the year. We have six short weeks to complete the Synod Year and all payments that will be reported must be made within that time. This is therefore a final warning to delinquents.

I am pleased to report payments received within the last quarter period. Read this report carefully and make note of the blank spaces. It is also interesting to read the footnotes.

Church	Synod Dues	ULCA (Missions)	CHEY	LWA	Parish Messenger
Logberg	$10.00				
Geysir					$10.00
Immanuel				$ 40.54	
Bru	40.00	$135.00		176.00	10.00
Trinity	10.00	27.00			5.00
Arborg	100.00			48.62	40.00
**Gimli		52.67			
Calvary	37.01	97.20		99.00	
Blaine	33.00	30.00		28.16	10.00
Vidalin	57.00	221.00			10.00
Gudbrands	25.00	5.00			
Vidines	20.00	20.00		15.00	5.00
*Riverton	75.00			35.00	
Vidir	23.00			25.00	10.00
Betel	25.00				2.00
Lincoln		17.00			
Mikleyar	44.00	44.50			10.00
**Gimli		52.67			
***Cavalier		68.25			
Vesturheims	28.00	50.00			10.00

*Riverton Congregation is paying an old account. It is very encouraging to find that a congregation will accept its own responsibility. It seems difficult enough to pay current costs and it is therefore very commendable to pay both past and present dues. Arborg also did this.

**Gimli is adding more to their apportionment. This is the first time and we are glad to make a note that the ULCA is getting consideration.

***Cavalier, our new member, makes its first payment. This payment is credited to apportionment as ordered by this congregation.

N. O. BARDAL.

Lutheran World Action Sunday is May 4th. " Love's Working Arm", still has much work to do. The cry of thousands of our Lutheran brethren throughout the world is still desperate. Let each congregation make a special L.W.A. offering on May 4th. If your congregation is not having a service that Sunday, have a special collection made among your people during that period. Remit your contributions to the Treasurer.

HOUSE OF GOD

By REV. HARALD S. SIGMAR

I will be quite candid and admit at the outset that when I accepted my call to the Gimli Lutheran Parish, I dreaded the thought of serving as Chaplain of the Synodical Home for the Aged. The main reason for this anxiety was my consciousness of my severe limitations in the use of the Icelandic language. Knowing what a stronghold Betel has always been of Icelandic Culture, tradition and language, I felt a sense of keen inadequacy as I contemplated becoming pastor of this Home. However, I found considerable consolation in knowing that I had my father in the background—a helping hand with sermons, prayers and addresses; and in the foreground I had my "Aunt Jenny" (Mrs. J. A. Tallman) as Matron of the Home—to smooth my path and give me moral support. What I hadn't counted on was the helping hand and heart of the fifty-nine residents of the institution I had been called to serve.

From my very first contacts in Betel I realized that I was among friends who wanted me to feel very much at home with them. They encouraged and strengthened me. And I felt as if they turned a deaf ear to my grammatical errors and linguistic deficiencies, but opened wide their hearts to the Love I wanted to convey to them.

Then I began to realize that here was a unique experience for me. Here is a place where is preserved the best of the old traditions of our Icelandic culture. Here I began to see in action the fine qualities of our tradition which I had seen before only in isolated cases. What had been a dream world of the past was now my privilege to enter in reality. And it is rare opportunity for which I am deeply grateful, to walk into the portals of this place which I have come to feel is a gateway to Heaven.

I don't want it thought that in my enthusiasm for Betel I have idealized away the problems that do exist. The infirmities of old age are present. There is illness, blindness and rheumatism. There are evidences of the human failings to which our race falls heir. But discontent and inconpatability are at an amazing minimum which is due in large measure to the Matron and her efficient staff.

The significant fact that remains in spite of trials and problems is that none of these are triumphant. Even dying and death "hath no dominion" in this house of faith where Jesus Christ is not simply a Sunday guest but a full-time resident.

This that I write does not pretend to be a report on the operation of our first Icelandic Home for the aged—the inspiration for the other splendid ones that followed. It is simply that I have been so delighted and inspired that I want to share with the readers of the "Parish Messenger" my personal feelings about it—in an admittedly subjective way. That would not be complete unless I also told you how I feel about the residents. It is paradoxical. As a young man, I have come to feel about so many of them as if they were my grandfathers and grandmothers. But I also have a feeling—as their pastor—as if they are my children. Full of trust, faith and love; eager and responsive; unashamed at their excitement about Christmas and the little joys of life. When I pronounce the benediction upon them, they don't seem bent with age or wrinkled. They are God's little children—in His loving care, and the Smile of Eternity is upon them. And they have helped me to understand — even as they have taught me so very much—what was meant by our Lord when He said, "unless ye become as little children ye shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven". Truly this is "Beth-el"—House of God.